

Weekly Report
Special Enforcement Area
January 15 - 21, 2004

Monroe County

On January 13, Officer Gordon Sharp met with a group of local fishermen at the Big Pine Key Fishing Lodge. Officer Sharp explained all the current fishing regulations and passed out current information. He also discussed numerous topics such as: how different agencies work together to regulate the resources of the Florida Keys, boating safety requirements, and how the merger has affected the citizens of the State of Florida.

Officer Gordon Sharp, at the request of the Key West Montessori Charter School, gave a presentation on reptiles to a group of 56 students, first through third grade. He showed the students a live alligator, box turtle, corn snake, king snake, and a spurred tortoise. Officer Sharp also had several hands-on exhibits including snake skins, fossilized turtles, old turtle shells, and abandoned turtle eggs – two which he left for the students to keep inside an incubator until they hatch. The eggs were from a freshwater mud turtle. He also provided the school with handouts on snakes living throughout Florida.

On January 15, Officer Gordon Sharp followed up on an incident that started on November 23rd. During the previous incident, he issued Mr. Robert J. Gessner two citations. Mr. Gessner failed to produce identification so the officer required a fingerprint on both citations. FDLE through AFIS and IAFIS advised that the fingerprints belonged to another individual, who had the same date of birth as the alleged Robert J. Gessner. A criminal history of the subject revealed he had been arrested by Key West Police Department for failure to register as a sex offender the day after Officer Sharp cited him last November. On January 15, Officer Sharp obtained a photo of the subject that match the description of the subject claiming to be Robert Gessner. Officer Sharp located the subject, incarcerated at the Monroe County Jail, and reissued the original citations under his correct name. Additionally, the man was cited for Obstruction By Disguised Person. The officer also discovered the subject failed to pay the previous fines and failed to appear on the original charges that occurred in November.

Officer David Dipre met with a large group of local fishermen at the World Class Angler in Marathon. There were approximately 200 people in attendance who were interested in new laws and requirements. Officer Dipre spent 1 _ hrs explaining the Highly Migratory Species permits, the National Marine Sanctuary rules and regulations, and boating safety requirements for recreational and commercial vessels. After a lengthy question and answer session, the group asked Officer Dipre if he could continue to participate on a routine basis. They were very enthusiastic about his participation and thanked him for his involvement.

Officer Mallow responded to a complaint after a federal agent was harassed while conducting official business onboard a commercial fishing vessel. While the was docked at a local seafood market, Officer Mallow conducted a fisheries inspection and found numerous violations including finning of numerous Hammerhead sharks. The captain of

the vessel was issued a \$1500 citation for finning sharks and a warning for a state violation.

On January 18, Officer Gordon Sharp responded to a snake bite complaint in the Lower Keys. The victim was being treated at Key West Hospital for a Coral snake bite and the hospital needed some anti-venom/serum. Officer Sharp, with his knowledge of reptiles, helped the hospital determine that the bite was most likely from a Mangrove snake and not a Coral snake due to the reaction from the bite. Officer Sharp responded to Stock Island where the bite took place to try and locate the snake. The neighbors advised there were lots of Mangrove snakes in the area, but no Coral snakes. Investigator II Lieutenant William Trubey, Broward County, was notified and the victim was air lifted to Miami for treatment.

On January 20, Officers Charles Mallow and James Johnson responded to a complaint at Boca Chica Naval Air Station after receiving reports of an alligator on the runway where the F18s were trying to land. The officers arrived to find a five-foot long crocodile sunning on the runway. The officers encouraged the animal back into the swamp area next to the runway. They also advised that no one should feed the crocodile any longer and that would help to keep it from being a nuisance.

Officers Scott LaRosa and Tom Hill were on water patrol in the area of North Key Largo, ocean side. While Officer LaRosa was showing Officer Hill an area where violators frequent, they encountered a vessel with several occupants. Officer Hill conducted a vessel boarding and found the captain did not have the required safety equipment. Officer Hill also found a cooler with numerous fish of different species, on which was a ten inch mutton snapper. Officer Hill issued the captain a misdemeanor citation for the undersize snapper and warnings for the other violations.

Total documented vessel groundings for this week: 3

Total documented turtle incidents for this week: 4

Collier County

On January 16, Lieutenant Wayne Maahs executed a warrant on a commercial fisherman for felony trap robbing that occurred on October 16, 2003. Lieutenant Maahs seized the GPS of the vessel that was used to conduct the violation and will use the information to conduct further investigations.

On January 19, Officer John Humphreys responded to complaint of shots fired within a management area. Officer Humphreys found a vehicle with four occupants, three males and one female. There were two firearms in the vehicle, a Heckler & Koch 40 cal. and a CZ52- 50 cal. Further investigation revealed both firearms had been reported stolen. There were also narcotics in the vehicle and other violations. During the investigation Officer Humphreys discovered these were not the subjects firing weapons in the Picayune Management Area.